

















## SIX-PAGE EDITION

## SIXTEEN AND SIXTY.

Oh, grandpa! he was in his own chair.  
And in his little bed he lay.  
"I'm going to be married, oh, grandpa,  
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O'Flaherty's language was forcible; well it might be. Marillier apologized in the handsomest manner, but the blood of the descendant of the "fighting Flaherty" was up, and mere words had no power to appease him.

He demanded the instant execution of Congo, or the satisfaction of a gentleman.

"Are these your only alternatives?" asked the Major, gravely.

"They are," blustered Terence.

"Then I accept the latter," said Marillier unhesitatingly.

"You are a gentleman, indeed!" exclaimed O'Flaherty, suddenly sobered.

And if you think that dirty little baste worth fighting about, Terence O'Flaherty is not the man to beguile you the pleasure.

Still, I'd be ready to overlook it, and let bygones be bygones if you'd give me one single decent reason for keeping the baste."

"Pause, during which all grew breathless with excitement.

Marillier looked as imperturbable as ever. "If one reason will afford you satisfaction, Mr. O'Flaherty, I don't see how it can be refused."

"The reason is this: I have seen the beast because I expect him some day to be worth £4,000 a year to me."

And that was all he ever got out of him.

I got leave in January, and started home joyfully.

My father had been promoted to a good living in the country since I left home, and the first week of my visit was spent in seeing and being seen.

My sisters Freda and Gertrude trotted me all over the place displaying the church, the cow, the pet old women, the schools, the pony-trap, the garden, and everything else that was worth a look.

First, snipe-shooting; then a bird hunt; then a stucco villa with "Castellare" painted on the garden gate, on which the manly forms of two or more of the Royal Manx were generally to be seen lounging in conversation with their lovely, dark-haired, and Norah. Third, Major Maillier's monkey, and why he kept it.

The snipe became a bore now and then, and my interest in Gertrude's bewitching Irishisms or Norah's quaint sayings flag occasionally, but the mention of Congo's name or his latest iniquity brought excitement into our latest moments directly.

Congo was a beautiful little creature, with long, soft fur, dark face and paws, and gentle, mournful eyes, the temper of a wild cat, and the morals of an imp of darkness.

He was supposed to reside in a house, made of a vine-case, in Carmody, the Major's servant's room; but except for the purpose of secreting his plunder in the straw, never was found there by any chance.

Every device that the mind of man could conceive, and Carmody hit upon a fresh one once at least, failed to secure him.

He hit through lead, rope, and wire, and knotted, picked lock, dislocated chains and always ended by flying like a demon-spider, up and down every passage and staircase in the place—Carmody swearing in his rage that he would gain the coign of vantage whence it was impossible to dislodge him.

To appreciate the situation one should have known the Major.

He was a staid and dignified personage, about 40, very quiet and rather precise and "old-maidish" in his ways. I always suspected that he considered himself created by nature to be the pattern of the British officer and gentleman, and in his dress, demeanor and conversation to be instructive studies for our youngsters—each was so perfect in its way. I can't imagine why we didn't all grow up as good boys and girls, and he didn't often choose and generally held aloof from our sports and pastimes, not only refusing to enter his home for our staid work on tactics, but declining to lend him his Miss Nora McCran for the same occasion.

His dress was a study of cut and color, from the parting of his hair to the toes of his boots; but it was not his dress, or his most such a combination of military precision with feminine prettiness; trophies of warlike weapons; lace bouffants to his shirt; a diamond-encrusted; tiger-skin, creased, worn, and old china. He was good valuable engravings and photographs about, and over the fire place hung a large water-color sketch of a landscape, with a terrace—a magnificent old baronial residence—which, without the slightest fondness for the idea, we all agreed to be the Major's birthplace or inheritance, of which he had been somewhat wrongfully deprived.

There was also a big writing-table, surrounded by laden bookshelves, at which he spent most of his spare time, elaborating and revising his great work on tactics, which we were wont to speak with respectful admiration. Now imagine, over this scene of peaceful propriety a four-armed fiend rampaging, leaving destruction in his train, playing all manner of impish pranks, hiding a bottle of "Brilliantine" carefully uncorked, in the Major's boots; swallowing every stud he possessed under the delusion that he was a lion, and then baring him with freshly-dressed profane sheets and under to pellets—and you'll have some notion of the never-failing start the existence of Congo gave to life in Ballynaggin.

Why did he keep it?

Some of Congo's performances turned him livid with rage, but never drove him to condemning the brute to exile or execution.

"Every man has his pet extravagance," he was wont to say, smiling serenely. "I suppose Congo is mine."

Never but once saw Major Marillier near to his wits' end, when a rumor that Congo was lost arose.

He wasn't the best; he had as many hind-legs as a magpie. My bed was one, and there he was, blacking-brush, one of the Major's immaculate gaiters, and the big owl's head with the red glass eyes that used to adorn Miss Lavinia McCran's hat, just in time to prevent his master from bursting into tears, or offering £100 reward, either of which seemed imminent.

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We speculated, argued, betted, nearly fought over it, so disproportionate grew the excitement in the dull stagnation of our lives in Ballynaggin, and got no nearer the truth. Once the solution of the enigma seemed within our grasp—thanks to Mr. Terence O'Flaherty.

He was a local "squire" proprietor of the before-mentioned bog, whom, in default of other society, we used to invite continually to meet.

He was heavy enough when sober; later on, great on Home Rule and the departed glories of Ireland and his family. "The fighting Flaherty," duplicate of note in the battle days of old, when Castle Flaherty was kept up in princely style and the "clark" in the cellars would have flooded the country for miles round himself some whisky and water one evening before departing, when suddenly a black figure descended with a swing and a bound from somewhere, alighting on O'Flaherty's shoulders. Congo, of course, he clanked fast to O'Flaherty's hair with one hand and plucked the other into the scalding brew, presumably in

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Still, I'd be ready to overlook it, and let bygones be bygones if you'd give me one single decent reason for keeping the baste."

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